

(1st Corinthians 4:1-9)
“Faithful, Not Famous – How God Measures His Servants”

~ INTRO ~

ALRIGHT...

- As we continue learning how to “Apply Christianity”
 - Remember Paul has been addressing division in the church.
 - (The broken behavior that hinders the Gospel).
- He corrects the churches view on how to see leaders.

PAUL SAYS...

- Leaders are servants – not celebrities.
- Leaders are stewards – caretakers of the gospel.

READ (1 Cor 4:1-9) NKJV

~ STUDY ~

PAUL CORRECTS THE CHURCH...

- By saying that leaders should understand...
 - Being a “*spectacle*” (v.9)...
 - Represents the weakest & poorest prisoner...
 - Being placed into a Roman arena to die.

IDEA #1 – REQUIREMENTS (vv.1-2)

(v.1) PAUL USED THE WORD “*ministers of Christ*” (KJV).

- Strongs #(G5257) *hyper-e-tes*
 - A word that speaks of an under-rower on a ship.
 - This was a slave rowing on a lower deck
- An under-rower wasn’t admired!

PAUL WAS PUSHING BACK...

- Against the tendency of the Corinthians to elevate leaders.
 - By saying under-rowers are hidden NOT spotlighted!

HOWEVER... PAUL ISN’T SAYING...

- That we should NOT esteem our spiritual leaders.

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(1 Thess. 5:12-13) NLT

“Dear brothers and sisters, honor those who are your leaders, in the Lord’s work. They work hard among you and give you spiritual guidance. Show them great respect and wholehearted love because of their work...”

THE RIGHT UNDERSTANDING...

- Has two main traits:
 1. **Servants** = Our position is under the authority of the Lord.
 2. **Stewards** = Our responsibility is to faithfully manage for the Lord

CHURCH...

- It does not matter whether it’s you, me, or the MAN...
 - Down the street.

OUR HUMAN TENDENCY IS TO DRIFT!

- In the past when God’s people experienced blessing...
 - Many times it resulted in spiritual decline.
- Blessing led to complacency...
 - AND complacency led to rebellion.

(v.2) *be found faithful...* NOT prideful...

- *Servants*... NOT self-entitled.

THE BEST EXAMPLE THAT APPLIES TO THE CHURCH...

- Is addressed by Jesus (Luke 16:1-13) NKJV
 - It covers personal stewardship of money.

HERE’S THE POINT:

- Paul is NOT saying be successful...
 - He’s saying be faithful with what God gives you.

IDEA #2 – ACCOUNTABILITY (vv.3-5)

OK... LET’S BREAK THIS DOWN...

- We have three sections OR sets of judgment here:

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I. Judged by others (v.3)

This isn't just a casual opinion—it's a careful evaluation that often looks for fault.

- Like a cross-examination with confrontational questions.
 - Scrutinizing behavior to trap someone.

A CRITICAL PERSON...

- Is someone who habitually judges, finds fault, ...
 - And evaluates others harshly.
- This kind of critical spirit can become toxic...
 - AND damage relationships in the church.

APPLICATION:

- Don't allow yourself to live under the ill-motivated criticism of another.
 - Paul says, “*It's a very small thing*” (v.3).

II. Judged by self (v.4)

- My conscience is clear
- I don't know of ANY unfaithfulness in my stewardship.

THIS IS NOT A CLAIM TO PERFECTION.

- Paul... is just living out integrity... to the best of his ability.

APPLICATION:

- Do your best and commit the rest!
 - Don't over-scrutinize your every move.
- A clear conscience is good... But God is the ultimate judge.

III. Judged by God (v.5)

THIS ONE CAN BE TRICKY...

- If we read it too fast.
 - Notice at the end of the verse it says *praise*...
- God sees what others miss.
 - Overlooked faithfulness will be rewarded.

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THIS DOESN'T MEAN...

- We never evaluate things.
 - It means we don't pass final judgment...
 - On motives before God does.

APPLICATION:

- God's judgment is perfectly accurate...
 - He exposes what's hidden and rewards what's faithful.

IDEA #3 – WHY IT MATTERS (vv.6-9)

In this final section Paul's tone becomes sharper.

- He exposes pride, comparison, & spiritual arrogance in the church.

(v.6) Paul and Apollos were the examples being used...

- To teach Biblical principles.

Because the Corinthian Church...

- Had a practice of inventing standards...
 - That led to prideful comparisons.

(v.7) **THREE QUESTIONS:**

- 1) Who makes you differ?
- 2) What do you have that you didn't receive?
- 3) Why do you boast as if it were not a gift?

THIS IS THE HULK SMASH MOMENT!

- Pride collapses when we realize...
 - That everything we have is a gift from God.

(v.8) This is holy sarcasm to make a point.

- Paul's saying this kind of mind-set is out of touch with reality.

(Proverbs 11:2) NLT

“Pride leads to disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.”

~ IN CLOSING ~

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THE SIMPLE TRUTH IS...

- Jesus died for your sin...
 - And He invites you to trust & follow Him today.

IF YOU WANT TO BE SURE YOU'RE GOING TO HEAVEN...

RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE...

- You can quietly pray:

Lord Jesus, I believe You died for my sins.

- *Please forgive me... And take control of my life.*